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place home economics Extension systems.

In Africa, a continent characterized by weak infrastructures and extremely limited resources, the female home economics Extension personnel are an invaluable human resource. Files in AHEA's International Division disclose that in the fifteen English-speaking African countries for which we have data, there are 6288 field-level home economics workers.

The issue, of course, is the confused signals FAO is sending to developing countries when the United Nations' agricultural agency almost misplaces home economics, which is so integral to agricultural Extension in many developing countries. Even more to the point, doesn't a prudent sense of economy dictate that the resources which FAO is allocating to rural women go into strengthening these existing Extension systems?

Second, modern rural home economics training of paraprofessionals is geared to the multifaceted roles and onerous responsibilities of rural women. Well-conceived training programs of home economics Extension field personnel include a high percentage of courses in agriculture and some in animal husbandry. Because home economics Extension is the most direct and effective outreach to rural women where such programs are too traditional, shouldn't FAO be in the lead in helping countries update and make relevant outdated training?

Third, even so, what discipline can replace home economics in preparing outreach personnel to help rural women in areas just as sensitive to the food situation as agriculture production—food preservation and storage to prevent food losses, fuel wood conservation by using improved stoves and cooking methods, and nutrition education?

AHEA might ask FAO to consider the following:

- Country appraisals of existing home economics training to determine if it meets the needs of rural women, particularly with regard to food production.
- Assistance to training institutions in modernizing home economics training when requested.
- Publication of resource materials reflecting recent concerns and trends in rural development to be used in the training and outreach of home economics Extension personnel.
- Fellowships for senior home economists for advanced study to upgrade their knowledge and technical skills in supervising the new generation of field-level personnel.
- Increased staffing of home economics professionals in FAO to carry out these programs.

Home economics has the only professionally led outreach service with an integrated approach to the needs of the family. With their multiple concerns for family food production and preservation, nutrition, infant and child care, sanitation, and income generation, home economics programs help the rural woman in a way she can understand. In many countries the only way to reach rural women is through the home economics Extension system, which is currently in place, staffed, and workable. Our international development programs include training in family planning, nutrition, food production and preservation, child development, and income generation. To neglect this existing system and its wealth of human resources is at the least short-sighted, if not unconscionable.